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SUBJECT: AU PSC COMMISSIONER DJINNIT ADDRESSES THE NORTH
ATLANTIC COUNCIL

11. (SBU) Summary: In a disappointing March 2 address to the NAC, African Union Peace and Security Council Commissioner Said Djinnit said the AU "highly appreciated" support received from NATO, including assistance with airlift, capacity building, and "important" lessons learned training, and welcomed ongoing support to the AU Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) as needed. However, Djinnit ducked questions about how to take NATO-AU cooperation to the next level, and has apparently grown cold on the idea he pushed earlier for a framework agreement to enable cooperation. Djinnit did not ask for specific assistance to the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), saying the AU is still "working out details and modalities" of that mission. Regarding the draft NATO-AU framework agreement, Djinnit suggested the two organizations should gain more experience cooperating on the ground before moving forward with this agreement. Djinnit suggested a role for NATO in building the capacity of the fledgling African Standby Force (ASF), in order to "increase its capacity to carry out peacekeeping operations." He repeatedly asked for assistance in the form of logistics and financing for peacekeeping operations. The Secretary General emphasized that NATO stands ready to provide increased support to the AU, including to the planned AU-UN "hybrid" package for Darfur. End Summary.

12. (SBU) In opening remarks, the SYG said that the "deteriorating" situation in Darfur was putting pressure on the international community to act; at the same time, he noted some progress at the political level. The SYG noted that, in conjunction with the EU, NATO had airlifted more than 24,000 AU troops to and from Darfur. In addition, NATO had carried out capacity-building training with 200 AU officers, mentored an information assessment cell, and provided lessons-learned trainers. NATO stands ready to provide increased support, including to the planned AU-UN "hybrid" package for Darfur. The SYG mentioned the AU note verbale sent in January requesting assistance with AMISOM, adding that NATO is still waiting for specifics.

13. (SBU) Djinnit said the AU "highly appreciated" the support it received from NATO, mentioning airlift, capacity building, and "important" lessons learned training. Djinnit noted the AU's current request for NATO assistance to AMIS will expire

in June 2007. While the AU expects increased UN involvement over the next months, Djinnit said, he hoped that NATO could provide further assistance if needed. The Commissioner said the AU is still "working out details and modalities" of AMISOM, and only a general letter had been sent to partners. Some AU Allies remain "sensitive" to aspects of the AMISOM mission, he added, particularly the political and security situation on the ground in Somalia.

¶4. (SBU) Djinnit said two Ugandan battalions were in a "high level of readiness" to deploy to Somalia, and that he expected some of these troops on the ground in a few days. He added that the AU intends to run AMISOM for a short period only, with a follow-on mission provided by the UN. Djinnit argued that deploying these first two battalions could help build support for the overall mission from allies and partners. He complained of a lack of logistic and financial support for AMISOM, noting that only the U.S. and the UK had offered both, while France had offered assistance in training and equipping troops. In the end, he said, any solution in Somalia will need to be political, adding that the AU is pressing the transitional government to be more inclusive.

¶5. (SBU) Djinnit described his vision of an "African Peace and Security Architecture" which, among other concepts, would involve building the capacity of the ASF. He suggested that NATO be involved in the training of this force in order to "increase its capacity to carry out peacekeeping operations." Training of this force would be done in Addis Ababa. Djinnit said the AU cannot remain "indifferent" to conflicts in Africa, stressing the need to act quickly in certain circumstances. However, the AU still has a "gap in capacity" to carry out such missions. He called on the international community to provide logistical and financial support to AU peacekeeping operations, saying the AU would need "hundreds of millions" of dollars.

¶6. (SBU) Ambassador Nuland welcomed the growing impact of the AU as a force for peace and stability, and also welcomed Djinnit's efforts to increase planning capacity and overall capability. She stressed that NATO will continue to provide support to the AU and encouraged establishment of a strategic partnership between NATO and the AU. In this regard, Ambassador Nuland queried Djinnit on the NATO-AU framework agreement, which had been forwarded to the AU as an informal draft (an idea which originated with the AU as a way to smooth joint work). Djinnit responded that there are "sensitivities" in NATO-AU relations, and that the two organizations first need to work together on the ground more, to "combine a pragmatic and formal approach." Referring to this agreement, French Ambassador Duque said NATO needs to "avoid hastily getting involved in drafting this or that agreement."

¶7. (SBU) The Spanish PermRep asked about the timeline for deployment of the AU-UN "hybrid" force, expressed concern that it may not deploy until the summer of 2008, and asked how pressure could be increased on the Sudanese government to accept this force. He also asked for Djinnit's views on combating terrorism in Africa. The Dutch Ambassador asked for specifics of how NATO could assist the ASF. The UK PermRep suggested that NATO engage in long-term capacity building with the AU, adding that the AU appears to have challenges moving from decision making to the actual implementation of operations. He also queried if NATO's current liaison arrangements to the AU are sufficient. The Norwegian PermRep said that NATO is ready and able to provide support to AMIS, including for any additional requests from the AU. He asked how NATO could "build trust" within the AU.

The German PermRep noted that coordination within the international community in Darfur could be better, and asked Djinnit for his views on how to improve this. The French Ambassador said the AU is contributing to peace and stability in Darfur, adding that it is necessary to examine the correlation between what the AU needs and what NATO provides; assistance needs to closely follow needs expressed by the AU.

¶8. (SBU) In response to PermReps' questions, Djinnit said the

AU remains concerned about terrorism in Africa. The AU is taking a "firm stand" against terrorism and "religious extremism" and has developed an action plan, "open to any partnership." He noted that internal coordination within the AU is difficult, making it challenging to transmit requests for assistance to Allies; in addition, not all Allies agree to such requests, further complicating AU decision making. On Darfur, he noted the proposed "heavy" support package will need "substantial" military enablers. He described the AU as being "overwhelmed" by conflicts, and that while the political will existed, the capacity to intervene was lacking.

19. (SBU) Comment: Djinnit did not take full advantage of his address to the NAC to make specific, concrete requests of NATO. While he asked for general assistance to AMIS and the ASF, he was reticent on NATO assistance to AMISOM, as well as the NATO-AU framework agreement (which Djinnit himself had originally requested). This may reflect internal AU politics, and perhaps opposition on the part of some AU allies to closer ties with NATO. However, this sort of reticence, coupled with the slow pace at which the AU formally requests assistance, is hindering NATO's ability to provide worthwhile and needed cooperative efforts. End Comment.
NULAND